

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED *MS Direct* 02-277,

01-235,
01-317,
00-244



ORIGINAL
U.S. SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL
WASHINGTON
RECEIVED

APR - 9 2003

202-224-3441 (p)

<http://cantwell.senate.gov>

202-228-0514 (f)

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2003

Contact: Jennifer Crider
202-224-8277

Senator Maria Cantwell's Statement on the Federal Communications Commission
Seattle Field Hearing on Media Ownership

WASHINGTON, DC – Thank you, Dr. Copps, for sharing this statement with the Washington constituents I am so proud to represent. Were I able to be here, I would be very happy to introduce you as a man of amazing knowledge and dedication, who I am glad is undertaking this important inquiry, but I will save everyone the awkwardness of reading an introduction singing the reader's own praises. Although I am in Washington D.C. while the Senate is in session, please know that this event, this issue, is important to me, and is a matter I am overseeing closely as the FCC decides what I believe will dictate nothing less than the future of American media.

Lest I sound over-dramatic, I believe this is very much a decision-making that addresses more than economic questions; it is one that touches the very founding principles of this country. Ownership of the many different American media and control of the information they communicate involves some of our most core American values: freedom of speech, open and diverse viewpoints, vibrant economic competition, localism, diversity, and maintaining the multiplicity of voices and choices that undergird our precious marketplace of ideas.

I want to begin this hearing with an important observation that I strive to share daily with my colleagues in the Senate. Not all of the expertise and sound decision-making skills are centered in Washington D.C. - - - much of it is to be found in the "real" Washington. I am glad that Commissioner Copps, in his considerable wisdom, has decided to seek out some of this local wisdom today. The voices, experience, and knowledge that should inform any decision-making on media ownership rules are right here, in Washington state, in localities across the U.S., and the FCC can most ably make decisions when it hears these voices.

Why? Because right here is where the voices of the media are, where the individuals that participate in American media are.

I also want to thank you who have come to speak today for engaging yourself with the political process, for sharing your voices on this important issue, for getting involved. It is my hope that the expansive, open record that will develop from this and other hearings around the U.S will greatly influence the decisions facing the FCC.

No. of Copies rec'd 011
List A B C D E

Since its inception the charter of the FCC has been to ensure that the public resource of America's public broadcast media voice, no less than its lands and parks and physical resources, are managed for the benefit of all the public and in a way that preserves and fosters "the public interest."

Seven years ago, the prior Congress directed the FCC to try an experiment. The FCC lifted limits on national radio ownership and significantly reduced overlapping ownership restrictions in the local markets. I believe it is very important that we take a close look at the outcome of that experiment before we or the FCC embark on any further experiments! It may well be that the radio industry is a canary in the coalmine of media consolidation, an important first indicator of the problems that America will face if the FCC, or this Congress, attempts a "deregulation-at-all-costs" approach to addressing issues of media ownership. Whether or not this is truly the case, and what we can do about it if it is, is something I hope we can learn more about today.

###